

Artifact Donation FAQ

To fulfill part of the Siouxland Heritage Museums' mission of providing examples of the cultural heritage of Minnehaha County, the Collections Department relies on donations from the public. Our collection consists of over 132,000 artifacts to tell our region's story through exhibits, educational programming and public access through our online database and our Research Center. These artifacts need continuous care to maintain the highest level of preservation. Therefore, these are the types of questions the department answers before accepting new donations into the collection.

1. What type of items do the Siouxland Heritage Museums collect?

The Museums' mission is focused on Minnehaha County and the artifacts collected should have a historical significance to this area. Donations are reviewed on their historical significance to Minnehaha County, physical condition, history of ownership and use, and if it matches the criteria of the museum's collections policy. Items are also only accepted if there are a clear title and no restrictions from the donor. Those items might include:

- Historical Objects
- Photographs and videos
- Business/ organizational/ government records
- Manuscripts or personal papers, letters, diaries etc.

2. What type of items do the Siouxland Heritage Museums NOT collect?

In most cases, we do **not** collect materials without a clear or strong connection to Minnehaha County. Generally, we do **not** collect the following items:

- Unidentified photographs
- Wedding Dresses worn or made prior to the year 2000
- Military Uniforms made or worn prior to the year 2000
- Single Issue Newspapers
- Artifacts not used or made in Minnehaha County or the surrounding area

3. Do I need to talk to anybody before I drop off my donation?

Yes, all donations must be approved, no unscheduled drop-offs. Please call 605-367-4203 or email museum@minnehahacounty.gov to talk to the Collections Department staff about your donation(s).

4. Where can I drop off my donations?

Museum staff at the Old Courthouse Museum and the Pettigrew Home and Museum will not be able to accept unsolicited or "drop-off" donations. Any potential donation must be reviewed first by the Collections Department. Then all donations must be brought to the Irene Hall Museum Resource center at 4300 North Westport Avenue in Sioux Falls, SD unless prior accommodation has been made. The Siouxland Heritage Museums reserves the right to dispose of any unsolicited materials delivered to the Museums.

5. What happens if my donation(s) is not accepted by the museum?

If we do not accept your item(s) as a donation, we will provide an explanation as to why. We are happy to assist you if you would like help finding another institution or non-profit organization who might accept the item(s) for donation.

6. What happens to my item(s) after the donation?

Once we take possession of the item(s), our collections team will accession them; recording the description, attributes and condition of the item(s). Any stories you have shared with us will also be added. Once the accession process is finished, our Registrar will mail you the Deed of Gift form for you to sign and return to the museum. The Deed of Gift legally transfers ownership of the item(s) to the Siouxland Heritage Museums.

7. Do the Siouxland Heritage Museums purchase artifacts or provide appraisals of items?

No. The museum does not have the budget to purchase items. The museum also does not provide appraisals; but they may be able to provide you with information on how to find an appropriate appraiser.

8. Are donations accessible to family members or researchers?

Yes! The Siouxland Heritage Museums allows family members and researchers the ability to view our artifacts either online at siouxlandmuseums.catalogaccess.com or by calling 605-367-4203 to schedule an appointment to view items or conduct research.

9. Do donations go on display in exhibitions?

There is no guarantee your item(s) will be on exhibit. The Siouxland Heritage Museums have exhibitions at both the Old Courthouse Museum and the Pettigrew Home and Museum. Following standard museum practice, only a small percentage of the Siouxland Heritage Museums collections are on exhibit at any one time. Long-term exhibits can have negative effect on an object's condition. Items that are not on exhibit are kept in secure, climate-controlled storage for optimal preservation.

10. Can I loan my item(s) to the Siouxland Heritage Museums?

The Siouxland Heritage Museums occasionally solicits loans only for the use in upcoming exhibits. The Collections Policy does not allow for any long-term loans for non-exhibition purposes.

If you have any further questions, please call the Irene Hall Museum Resource center at 605-367-4203 or email museum@minnehahacounty.gov to speak with the Collections Department staff.